such benefits in future also. On receipt of this advice the bank advised its Zonal/Regional Offices to allow its Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe employees to exercise the option after giving the affidavits. However, except the one case referred to above, no other request has been received by the bank.

61

Development of Sericulture in Sikkim

2357. SMT. DIL KUMARI BHANDARI : Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state :

(a) whether any facilities have been provided by the Union Government to encourage sericulture in Sikkim; and

(b) if so, since when and the details of assistance given to the State Government, till-date ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI ASHOK GEHLOT) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) CSB had established one Research Extension Centre in the State during the year 1978. This Centre is presently assisting the State Government to formulate Sericulture Development Programmes and also popularising package of practices for mulberry and technology transfer for silk worm rearing. Besides the Centre is also imparting training to farmers on various aspects of sericulture.

61

Proposal of West Bengal Government on Balance of Payment Crisis

2358. SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government of West Bengal has submitted any proposal to tide over the balance of payment crisis; and

(b) if so, the reaction of the Union Government thereto ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI RAMESHWAR THAKUR) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Government of India has made a careful assessment of the alternative policy approach submitted by the West Bengal Government. As a package it does not provide an effective way out of the balance of payment difficulties at the present juncture. The Non-Resident Indians would not send large amounts to India so long as our reserves remain at the low level that they are now. As regards import compression, a severe cut has been imposed, and there is no scope for further import compression without serious adverse consequences for production and employment.

The Government of India has also taken a number of measures in areas which have been referred to in the policy initiatives indicated in the alternative policy approach. Firstly, a number of steps to maintain the reserves and thus the confidence of the Non-Resident Indians have been taken. Secondly, the reforms in the areas of exchange rate. Trade and Industrial policy are also meant to add to the confidence of the Non-Resident Indians. The package of measures already taken have started showing results in terms of reversal in the trend of outflow of NRI funds. Thirdly, a scheme enabling Non-Resident Indians and their overseas corporate bodies to contribute to India Development Bonds denominated in US $ to be issued by State Bank of India has just been announced to attract NRI funds. Fourthly, a review of policy and procedures bearing on Non-Resident Indian's investment has been proposed. Fifthly, maximum import compression is being achieved through a series of measures including those announced by Reserve Bank of India, changes in import policy and economies in canalised imports. In addition the recent exchange rate adjustment makes imports more expensive. Finally, the planned reduction in the fiscal